

LAW OF MODERN WAR IS WASTE, SAYS SHAW AFTER TRIP TO FRONT

(Continued from First Page.)

I stood with a sentiment behind me before British batteries shelling the Germans with reckless prodigality. We were within easy range of the German lines, and I waited for the reply. There was no reply; Beer Boche evidently considered that a shell saved him a shell gained. As the damaged German destroyed the hope of the lieutenants by throwing leaves to him, my parade our resources by showering shells on the Germans as if they were crabs at sixteen a shilling.

When I last met Richard Strauss we were standing in the courtyard of a London house, listening to a band of strings instruments from Barcelona which set our midriffs vibrating with their terrific ferocity, and our cry was "Louder! Louder!" But the thundering batteries on the Somme were still better than the Barcelona orchestra, and I found myself wishing that Strauss were willing to expose his for at the front you do not hate your enemy, though it may be your lot to fight him and kill him. Hating is one of the things you can do better at home—and you generally stay at home to do it.

Think you see Beer Boche no longer present you merely because you fire at him in the air when he wants to hit something, and my point is that, in spite of all the devastation I described in my article last week, he does not hit it except once, in a way, almost by chance. After all, it is the man with the bayonet who goes straight to his mark and the artillery is most useful when it is clearing the barbed wire from the path, for the days of the cutting pliers are past, and he who sends his men over the top before the wire is brushed away by the guns is a dupe who is likely to be perpetually slain, if he is rich enough to share the exploit he orders.

SAFER ON BATTLE FRONT THAN IN LONDON

Hence, you have the air of a road crowded with trains of lorries and trucks running and going from the trenches and of railway trains puffing away as quickly as at Croydon, of battle with their camouflage worn out and howitzers without any camouflage at all, naked to the heavens, all so well

known to the enemy that if I were to give not only the names of the places, but their latitude and longitude, I should make him as sure as I have already made, and yet, I was safer there than in London after dark.

I had to dress for the part of man-at-the-front in khaki, lest the visibility of my ordinary clothes should devote me to certain death at the hands of the Hun. Well, I traversed the Somme front very agreeably in the company of General Georges, whose brilliant Roman uniform would have tempted any one with the true spirit of a marksman, even in time of peace. When the general was remonstrated with for running this risk, he laughed and pointed out that the snow had made khaki as visible as scarlet and gold. He was quite right; I might just as well have borrowed a herald's tabard from Sir Alfred Scott Gatty for battle field wear, as for as my visibility was concerned. On all hands I could see bodies of men moving about, showing up against the glittering virgin snow like the bull's eye on a target. Yet neither they nor I were a penny the worse.

I must add that I was left with so poor an opinion of high explosives that I believe we should go back to the black gunpowder of Waterloo, if only it was possible to carry the great bulk of it that would be needed. I have already described how the houses of Ypres are still standing, though practically every hearth has had a high-explosive shell detonated on it. They make prodigious holes in the ground, these shells, and they hurl the clouds to the sky with volcanic energy, but the sky is just where they are not wanted. A less ardently aspiring, more terra-cotta, expansive explosion would be much more useful; it would bring a house down by blowing its ankles from under it, instead of first knocking its roof in and then very superfluously blowing it off again. Lateral, not vertical, energy is what, as it seems to the amateur, is needed. Inventors please note.

MAN STILL IS THE INSTRUMENT OF PRECISION

The combination of imprecision with the narrowest localization of effects leads to an impunity under exposure which is incredible to the man at home. I saw a steel foundry, one of the largest in the country, with its furnaces visible at night for a dozen miles round, in full blast under the very noses of the German air service; yet none of the many bombs aimed at it has done any damage worth mentioning. Its risk from its own ac-

tivity is greater than from the engines of destruction brought against it by its powerful enemies.

The British air squadron, which entertained me for a night, has discarded observers, photographic cameras and bombs, and consists of pure duellists. Their machines carry one man only, and he, with one hand on his tiller and the other on his machine gun, throws himself on any German he can find in the air, and intimates, in effect, like the Shakespearean warrior, that "for one or both of us the hour has come." At that station the command- ing officer, in pointing out to me an alarm horn which meant "Huns," accidentally touched the button and sounded it. Before he could explain that it was a false alarm a knight- errant sprang into the air and spent the next hour searching for an imaginary foe.

For the credit of one of my own professions, let me add that this commanding officer was a famous actor. That he handled a flying squadron without effort was easy for me to understand. To a man who has produced a modern comedy a campaign is child's play.

I do not, of course, mean to imply that dueling in the air is superfluous observation, photography, bombing, fire direction and the like. At another station I had seen the two-seated aeroplane with all its apparatus, including the sighting contrivances by which the dropping of a bomb can be aimed like a rifle on the Bully ranges. But the duellists brought me back to the fact that the man is still the instrument of precision par excellence. You do not have to send a thousand armen to do the work of one. You do have to send a thousand bombs to do the work of one. And, after all, they are much less likely to do it.

I must on these points—always in-

viting you to bear in mind that I have no authority for them except my own amateur observation—for two reasons: first, for the sake of those who, having husbands and sons and friends and sisters at the front, or being themselves in training for that necessary end, are tormented by the idea that nothing can long escape these terrible engines of destruction which have eyes in the air, and whose trajectory can be determined so exactly by their elaborate sighting contrivances and carefully calculated corrections that they can play a man infallibly fifteen miles off. They can, on anxious ones, but somehow they don't.

The commander-in-chief, with whom I spent a very pleasant afternoon, was good enough to take me to witness certain terrifying methods of destruction which the hardest hero might shrink from facing. Yet, seasoned warriors who had tried and faced these things laughed and made offers with respect to them which reminded me very strongly of the bets which my colleagues on the old St. Pancreas viceroy used to make when we discovered a new method of detecting the germ of a deadly disease in milk. They would, for a bet of half a crown, drink a quart of it, and they never paid the penalty which science declared inevitable.

The danger of these internal machines is real and appalling enough, but it cannot seek its foe as a man does. At Ypres, when the gas entered one regiment, and its victims lined the road, coughing their lungs out in torment, another regiment, undaunted by the spectacle, went right through them up towards the gas and carried on. No doubt these miracles can be explained, but they certainly

occur, and the moral is, do not be in a hurry to bid the devil good morning. Life is very uncertain at the front, but so is death. The inevitable does not always come off.

HERE'S A POINT FOR AMERICA TO REMEMBER

My second reason for insisting is the afore-said selfish taxpayer. He must be taught that war is not precise and economical. It is almost inconceivably wasteful and extravagant. It burns the houses to roast the pig, and even then seldom roasts him effectively. It is a gamble in which the German citizen and the British citizen must play the impossible martingale of double or quits. The German is economizing his ammunition only that he may waste it madly when the battle is joined again. We are darning the expense and hammering away because it is a poor heart that never rejoices; also, no doubt, because we have calculated that extravagance pays.

But calculation or no calculation, waste is the law of modern warfare; and nothing is cheap on the battle field except the lives of men. Give your soldier's trench mortars enough, and no enemy can live in his trench or escape being buried alive in his dugout.

But the Kaiser can say as much with equal truth. Therefore, my taxpayer, resign yourself to this: that we may fight bravely, fight hard, fight long, fight cunningly, fight recklessly, fight in a hundred and fifty ways; but we cannot fight cheaply. That means we must organize to increase our production. More saving wins no battles. If we are to destroy with one hand, we must create with the other.

One more moral: All the gases and

poisons and flame projectors that our enemies can invent and we copy are negligible as factors in victory compared to an increase in the number and precision of the weapons which will wholesale. And you can increase precision not only by improving the weapon, but by keeping your head better when using it. That is the mischief of hatred; it is bad for the head. The man who says "I will turn the handle of the machine gun, but I will not hate my enemy," is really more likely to hit him. He who buries the hatchet is more likely to bury it in the skull of his respected foe than to chop his own shins with it.

But I must reserve my moralizing for my next and last article. Copyright, 1917, by the Wheeler Syndicate, Inc.

The concluding article in this series by Mr. Shaw will be published on next Sunday in The Times-Dispatch.

Rushing a New Addition.

LEXINGTON, N. C., March 31.—The Erlanger Cotton Mill Company is rushing its large addition to its hosiery plant to completion. When finished, the new addition will contain four spindles and all the necessary machinery for manufacturing hosiery yarns, and a large additional force of workmen will have to be employed.

More Northern Capital for Bristol. BRISTOL, V.A., March 31.—More Northern capital is seeking investment in Bristol. Since the incorporation here of the Clinchfield Hosiery Mills by men from White Plains, N. Y., other capitalists and manufacturers from that

State have turned their eyes this way, and it is reported that another factory soon will be announced for Bristol. Just what the character of the new enterprise is to be has not yet been made public.


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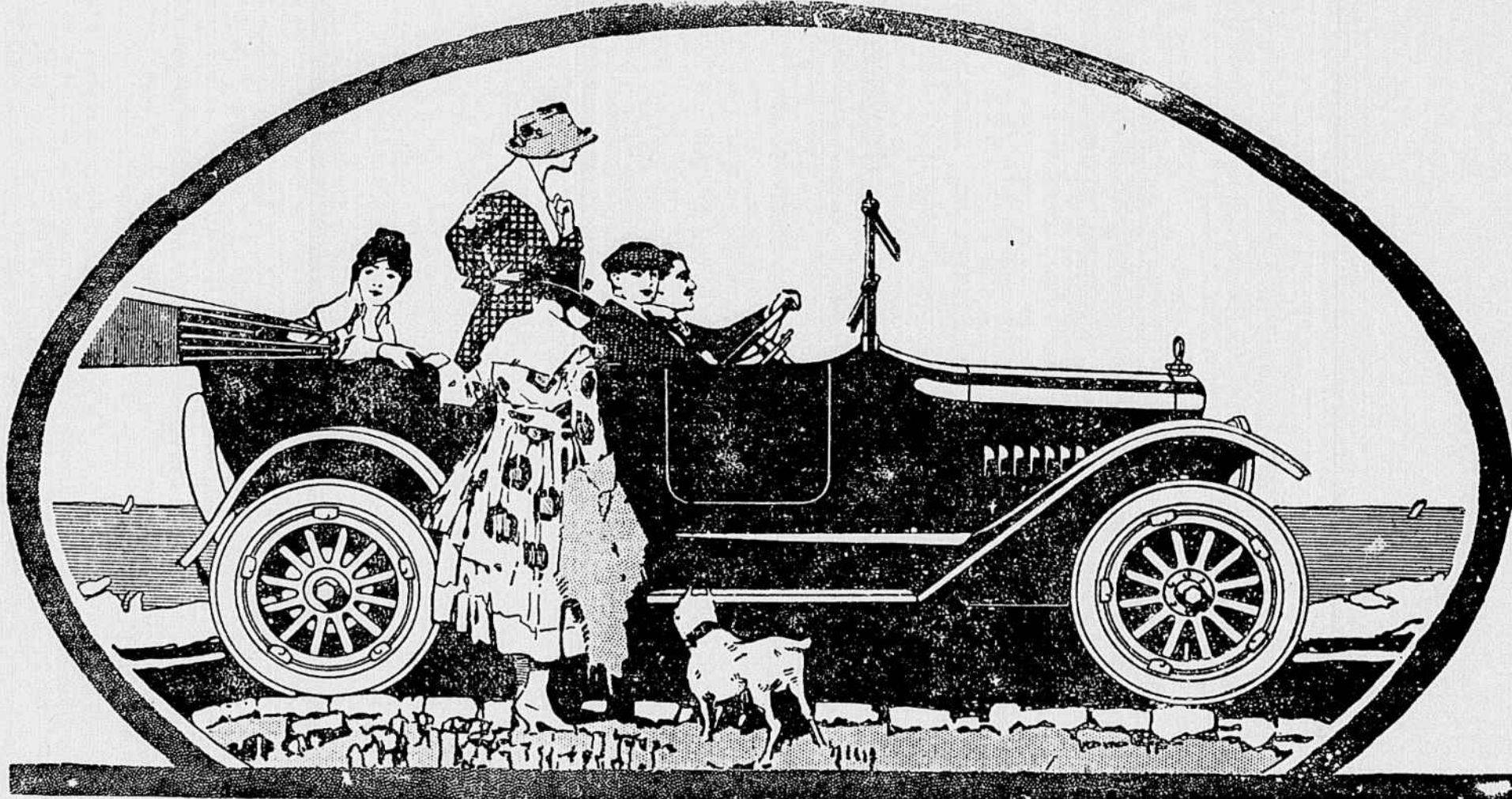
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